

Texas State Guard Medical Reserve Corps News Release
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Operation Lone Star 2006 Brings Humanitarian Medical Services to the Rio Grande Valley

It's a hot Sunday afternoon in Weslaco, Texas, home of the Weslaco National Guard Armory and temporary headquarters for the Texas State Guard and Texas Army National Guard Joint Medical Task Force (JMTF). Charged with implementing the Medical Reserve Corps operations associated with Operation Lone Star 2006, nearly two hundred military personnel begin arriving in pressed Battle Dress Uniforms (BDU), ready to serve one of the fastest growing annual humanitarian events in the state.

Serving under the direction of Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) civilian authorities, JMTF military physicians, nurses, administrative personnel, and safety/security forces deployed and implemented a variety of basic medical and dental services designed to improve healthcare opportunities for thousands of medically under-served individuals in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

For some of the individuals served, JMTF medics are the only physicians they will ever visit in their entire lifetime.

Since 1999, Operation Lone Star has provided basic medical and dental services each summer. In the eight years since it began, Operation Lone Star has consistently improved, offering more services and drawing larger segments of the Rio Grande Valley population. Over this period, the military side of the operation has evolved. Commanded first by US Navy reserve medical personnel, then the Texas Army National Guard, and for the first time in 2006, the Texas State Guard. The Texas State Guard has participated since 2004, so this was their third year of increasing responsibility.

Commanded by Brigadier General Marshall H. Scantlin, Commander of the Texas State Guard Medical Reserve Corps; this highly talented cadre of Medical Reserve Corps professionals and Texas Army National Guard personnel launched and managed a record-setting operation, serving more than 7,000 individuals between July 24th and August 3rd. As well as being an overwhelming success, the operation represents an impressive ability that is unique to highly motivated volunteer organizations. Essentially, the JMTF team assembled in less than 24 hours, working together for the first time in many instances, and successfully operated a fully functional, broad-based business spanning the scope of product services, administration, workers' compensation, risk management, logistics, shipping/receiving, accounting, human resources, media relations, and security. The operation was a smooth success based on the military Incident Command System (ICS) model. What community wouldn't benefit from a talented company that can pull together and successfully serve more than 7,000 individuals in less than two weeks?

During the operation the following basic medical services were offered:

- Immunizations
- Medical Screening
- Blood Pressure Screening
- Diabetes Screening
- Vision Screening
- Hearing Screening
- Basic Podiatry Screening
- Mental Health Screening
- Pharmacy
- Nutritional Counseling
- Referrals for Advanced Care
- Athletic Physicals
- Preventive Health Education

Basic dental services were offered as well:

- Exams
- X-rays
- Restorative Dentistry
- Extractions
- Oral Hygiene Instructions
- Dental Kits (Brush, Floss, Paste)
- Evaluations per Physician Referrals
- Referrals for Advanced Care:
 - Oral Surgeon
 - Periodontist
 - Orthodontist
- Limited Preventive Services

In a strong show of support for the operation, a number of statewide and local dignitaries visited the clinic sites on several occasions, taking back information and data that will help define how future humanitarian efforts are planned and implemented in Texas.

Texas State Senator Judith Zaffirini, Texas State Representative Armando Martinez, DSHS Commissioner Eduardo Sanchez, Starr County Judge Eloy Vera, Texas Army National Guard Commander Major General Blum, and Texas State Guard Commander Major General Powers toured various clinic sites. Each of the distinguished visitors offered supportive commentary and, most importantly, listened to the volunteers and patients to better understand their needs in order to garner the appropriate support for future such missions.

Texas State Guard MRC personnel represent a unique and evolving definition of citizen-soldiers that are trained and prepared to meet the post-911 challenges we face in our quickly changing world. “Med Rangers” are an all volunteer component of the Texas Military Forces serving under the Texas Adjutant General and at the discretion of the Governor of Texas. Defined by a deep sense of community service and humanitarian compassion, the MRC’s idea of summer vacation is a cut well above the usual definition of fun in the sun. In some instances working as many as 20 hours per day, MRC physicians, medical staff, and force support personnel are some of the most dedicated individuals you will ever meet. To participate in a Texas Medical Ranger operation is to experience a high energy event that you are likely never to forget. Perhaps the most impressive fact is that Texas State Guard soldiers are volunteers that have jobs back home in their local communities serving as surgeons, physicians, trauma nurses, pharmacists, emergency management coordinators, security personnel, and many other highly accountable professions. They contribute their professional expertise to such outstanding organizations as Walgreen’s, Trinity Mother Frances Health System, The University of Texas Health and Science Center at San Antonio, Anteon, DSHS, OSHA, community healthcare and EMS service providers, local law enforcement, and many other service-oriented entities.

If you have the will, we have the way.

Texas residents between the ages of 18 and 68 looking for an opportunity to serve their communities and be part of a unique and cutting edge organization may want to visit the Medical Reserve Corps website at:

<http://www.texasmedicalrangers.com>

While medical training, prior military experience, and/or higher education is not a requirement to join the Medical Reserve Corp, it is definitely a plus that in many instances may afford the opportunity to serve as a commissioned officer.

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